



The Sixty-eighth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,782nd Concert

Del Sol String Quartet

Kate Stenberg, *violin*

Rick Shinozaki, *violin*

Charlton Lee, *viola*

Hannah Addario-Berry, *cello*

Presented in collaboration with the
office of Cultural Programs of the
National Academy of Sciences in honor of
The Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection: Selected Works

April 11, 2010
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

This concert is sponsored in part by Cultural Programs of the National Academy of Sciences and the Randy Hostetler Living Room Music Fund.

The mission of the office of Cultural Programs of the National Academy of Sciences (CPNAS) is to explore the intersections of art, science, and culture through the presentation of public exhibitions, lectures, and other cultural programs. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) is a private, nonprofit, self-perpetuating society to which distinguished scholars are elected for their achievements in research, and is dedicated to the furtherance of science and technology and to their use for the general welfare. Upon the authority of the charter granted to it by the Congress in 1863, the NAS has a mandate to advise the federal government on scientific and technical matters.

Program

Pawel Szymański (b. 1954)

Five Pieces for String Quartet (1993)

Chinary Ung (b. 1942)

Spiral x: *"In Memoriam"* for amplified string quartet (2007)

INTERMISSION

Tania León (b. 1943)

"Esencia" para cuarteto de cuerdas (2009)

Agua de florida

Agua de rosas

Agua de manantial

Philip Glass (b. 1937)

Quartet No. 5 (1991)

The Musicians

Two-time winner of the Chamber Music America/ASCAP First Prize for Adventurous Programming, the San Francisco-based Del Sol String Quartet explores new ways of interacting with audiences, composers, and other musicians. The members of the Quartet are violinists Kate Stenberg and Rick Shinozaki, violist Charlton Lee, and cellist Hannah Addario-Berry. The group has commissioned and introduced new works by composers from around the globe. It has performed frequently at the Other Minds Festival in San Francisco, playing works by Pawel Mykietyń, Dobromila Jaskot, Elena Kats-Chernin, Michael Nyman, and Per Nørgård, among others. The Quartet often collaborates with innovative non-traditional performers such as the hip-hop inspired Haitian-American composer and violinist Daniel Bernard Roumain and the Chinese music ensemble Melody of China. In 2009 Del Sol premiered works commissioned from renowned Cuban-American composer Tania León and emerging Korean-American composer Paul Yeon Lee. Upcoming commissions include Joan Jeanrenaud's first string quartet and new works by Ronald Bruce Smith and Gabriela Lena Frank.

The Del Sol String Quartet has released four critically acclaimed CDs since 2002: *First Life*, a world premiere recording of the complete string quartets of American composer Marc Blitzstein; *George Antheil: The Complete Works for String Quartet*; *Ring of Fire: Music of the Pacific Rim*, focusing uniquely on music by composers from that part of the world; and *Tear*, featuring works by young composers from the Americas. *Gramophone* magazine described Del Sol as "masters of all musical things... playing with a combination of ferocious attack, riveting interplay, and silken splendor." The ensemble's current season includes the 2010 Pacific Rim Festival at the University of California at Santa Cruz and at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts; Candlelight Concerts in Columbia, Maryland; and the University of Vermont's Bishop Lane Artists' Series. More information about the Quartet is available at www.delsolquartet.com.

Program Notes

Through remarkable acuity, exhaustive study, and close relationships with artists, Robert and Jane Meyerhoff amassed a unique collection with an emphasis on six American masters: Jasper Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Brice Marden, Robert Rauschenberg, and Frank Stella, in addition to important works by leading abstract expressionists and younger artists. *The Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection: Selected Works* remains on view in the East Building until May 2, 2010. Like the artists represented in the exhibition, the composers whose works were selected for this concert share an aesthetic search that begins and ends with a sense of striking immediacy.

Polish-born Pawel Szymański graduated from the Warsaw State Higher School of Music (now the Fryderyk Chopin Music Academy), where he studied composition with Włodzimierz Kotonski and Tadeusz Baird. In 1984 he received a Herder scholarship to study for a year with Roman Haubenstock-Ramati in Vienna. He has subsequently garnered numerous prizes and awards including first prize in the Young Composers' Competition of The Polish Composers' Association (1979); an award at the Sacred Music Composition Contest of the International Bach Academy in Stuttgart, Germany (1984); a prize in the 1987 Louisville Orchestra Competition that included honorary citizenship of the city of Louisville, Kentucky; first prize in the Benjamin Britten Composing Competition in Aldeburgh, England (1988); and the main prize at the Competition of The International Foundation of Polish Music (1995). In 2005 Szymański was decorated with the Gloria Artis award, the Republic of Poland's highest honor for contributions to Polish Culture. In 2006 the Association of Polish Audiovisual Publishers presented a festival of Pawel Szymański's music and released a four-DVD video archive of the event.

Szymański's *Five Pieces for String Quartet* was composed in 1993 in response to a BBC commission for the Brodsky Quartet. The work is dedicated to the memory of his friend Jerzy Stajuda (1936–1992), one of Poland's outstanding artists. Each of the five pieces has a strongly individual texture, based on a single idea. The first is based on a brief phrase which could be

from Mozart or Haydn, but is worked through a dizzying series of slides from all four instruments. The second has a skipping, mechanical texture built up from single short notes. The third piece is the still, calm center of the work, consisting of glassy chords in harmonics, with faint ghosts of melody, while the fourth features loud, throbbing arpeggiated chords played by all four instruments. The final piece begins with the first violin playing bleak, squawking chords. The other instruments quietly creep in, but remain in the background. The first violin never manages to pull the others into playing in coordinated rhythm; instead they simply melt away into silence.

Chinary Ung was born in Takeo, Cambodia. For a young boy living in a small village, toys were scarce, and Ung recalled in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times* that “we would roll up banana leaves and blow in them to make a trumpet-like sound, or we would fill jars with rain water to hear the different tones they would make.” His family played traditional Cambodian instruments at home, and it was not until he was a teenager that Ung finally heard western music for the first time. In 1964, after studying the clarinet at the University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, he immigrated to the United States. He studied at Columbia University with Chou Wen-Chung, receiving his doctorate in 1974. In 1977, sensing the imminent disappearance of an entire musical tradition at the hands of the Cambodian dictatorship, Ung produced two LPs of Cambodian traditional music on the Folkways label. His own compositions came to international attention in 1989 when he received the prestigious Grawemeyer Award for his orchestral piece *Inner Voices*. He holds the position of professor of music at the University of California, San Diego.

Genocide is not an easy theme to acknowledge in music, but for Ung, whose studies in Buddhism have led him to express compassion for human suffering, it had become a necessity. In 2007, when he was awarded a Koussevitsky Commission to write a work for the Del Sol String Quartet, Ung decided to compose a tenth work in his “Spiral” series that would

commemorate the Cambodian holocaust perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge between 1975 and 1979. Among the 1.7 million people killed in Cambodia during those years were half of Ung's family members and many of his close personal friends.

The cries and shouts emanating from the four members of the string quartet as *Spiral x* (Spiral Ten) is performed present a tremendous challenge. The players intone nonsensical phonemes and sing in raw village style, very explicitly scored. In addition, various members are asked to sing and whistle, often while playing completely different material. Much of the work appears to be a dialogue between very different individual personalities until the conclusion, with its shamanistic unison shouting directed at dispelling the suffering of the victims, living and dead. *Spiral x* was premiered by the Del Sol Quartet to a standing ovation on October 19, 2007, in the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress, with the composer in attendance.

Cuban-born Tania León is recognized for her accomplishments as a composer, conductor, educator, and as advisor to arts organizations. She has been profiled on ABC, CBS, CNN, PBS, Univision, and Telemundo as well as in independent films. Her works have been performed by the China National Symphony, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra of Johannesburg, and the Norddeutsche Rundfunk Orchestra of Hamburg. She has collaborated with poets and directors, including John Ashbery, Rita Dove, Mark Lamos, and Derek Walcott. León has appeared as guest conductor with the Symphony Orchestra and Chorus of Marseille, the Orquesta de la Comunidad y Coro de Madrid, the Orquesta Sinfonica de Asturias, L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, and the Santa Cecilia Orchestra. A professor at Brooklyn College since 1985, Tania León was named distinguished professor of the City University of New York in 2006.

“Esencia” para cuarteto de cuerdas was commissioned for the Del Sol String Quartet through a grant from the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University. Through her first string quartet, León recollects her surroundings and childhood in Cuba. In her explanation of the piece, she makes reference to the more abstract meaning of *esencia* (“the essence or initial point that determines behavior and style”), but she also explains that the title given to each movement of the work represents the name of a fragrance that surrounded her while growing up in Cuba:

“Agua de florida is a cologne that was very popular among my neighbors. They used this cologne to clean and create a good spiritual vibration in their homes. *Agua de rosas* is another aroma that I recognized from that time, a favorite of my grandmother. Her name was Rosa. *Agua de manantial* is an aroma attributed to flowing fresh water in the countryside by the forests, near the farmers’ homes. People claimed that the waters of a *manantial* had healing attributes.”

Philip Glass grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, and studied music at the University of Chicago, the Juilliard School, and the Aspen Music Festival, where he worked with Darius Milhaud. Unsatisfied with what he was learning at home, he went to Europe to study with Nadia Boulanger, the legendary teacher of such famous composers as Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson. He also worked closely with sitar player Ravi Shankar. In 1967 Glass returned to New York City and formed the Philip Glass Ensemble, consisting of seven musicians who played keyboards and woodwinds and used electronic amplification and mixing to enhance and change the sound of their instruments. He was soon dubbed a “minimalist” composer, but he did not care for this label, preferring to speak of himself as a composer of “music with repetitive structures.” Through his large output of work and wide-ranging collaboration with artists in other fields, including Woody Allen, David Bowie, Allen Ginsberg, and Twyla Tharp, Philip Glass has had an extraordinary impact on the musical and intellectual life the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

The tone of the Glass' *Fifth Quartet* is luminous from the opening bars, where a pluck and a shimmering leap up through the instruments transforms the trademark Glass arpeggio into a sweet bell-like announcement. Similarly transformed are all of the familiar conventions of the composer's style, including his elusive repetitiveness where subtle shifts continually occur. A study in contrasts, the quartet moves from fast-moving rhythmic sections to slow, chordal ones as dynamics constantly shift back and forth between loud and soft.

*Program notes compiled by Charlton Lee, using materials provided by Charles Amirkhanian, BBC-3, and Mark Swed (excerpted from www.philipglass.com).
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Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Virginia Virtuosi

Music by Gershwin, Gottschalk,
Milhaud, Piston, and Ravel

Presented in honor of
From Impressionism to Modernism:
The Chester Dale Collection

April 18, 2010
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

Mailing address
2000B South Club Drive
Landover, MD 20785

www.nga.gov